

survival by the selfless men and women who make up the Red Cross' Southeastern Connecticut Chapter. Indeed, for nine decades, the Southeastern Connecticut Chapter has provided assistance to those in need in Connecticut, across the United States and around the world—truly exemplifying the ideals of the American Red Cross—offering aid and support during periods of acute emergency and prolonged rebuilding alike.

The Red Cross itself has a long and distinguished history in the United States. In 1881, the American Red Cross was founded by Clara Barton and dedicated to the basic principles of service to humanity, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. President Taft described the American Red Cross as "the only volunteer society now authorized by this government to render aid to its land and naval forces in times of war," for that was its original intent, to aid the casualties of war. As we all know, the organization's peace-time role grew rapidly, however, and at the turn of the century, new leadership brought new goals and expanded the services of the American Red Cross.

The growth of the American Red Cross was made possible by the success of regional chapters and the dedication of countless volunteers. The Red Cross was entirely staffed by volunteers until 1941, and today, volunteers still make up ninety-eight percent of all Red Cross personnel. When membership drives were initiated by the Southeastern Connecticut Chapter, residents of that area answered the call. Citizens from all walks of life—businesses, mills, farms, schools, churches and hospitals—donated their time, skill and money to the organization. Over the years, the Southeastern Chapter has been able to generate the ever-increasing support required to meet developing demands because of the sacrifice of their volunteers and the generosity of their neighbors.

Over the last 90 years, this generosity and self-sacrifice has produced a remarkable track record. Historically speaking, the Red Cross organization in Southeastern Connecticut was active even before its formal charter was granted on November 1, 1909. The founding members began organizing at the Park Congressional Church in Norwich, Connecticut in October, 1905. They played a role in the relief efforts following the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and in 1906 helped survivors of the San Francisco earthquake and fire. Back home in Connecticut, the chapter also moved rapidly to combat a growing tuberculosis epidemic in its early days.

As the world braced for war in August, 1914, the Chapter prepared for its own humanitarian campaign. The Chapter's members opened their hearts and homes to the work at hand. Preparations were carried out in homes, offices, social clubs, church societies and any other available space. The spirit of

the Red Cross in Southeastern Connecticut was truly embraced by the community as a whole. The Honor Roll Committee, the Home Service Section, the Motor Corps and the Junior Red Cross were all formed in the endeavor to relieve those affected by war.

During the latter decades of the century, the Chapter, and the Red Cross in general, made great strides in the field of blood donation. Connecticut Chapters contributed to the Blood Services of the war in Vietnam by sponsoring "Operation Helpmate" in which each Chapter supplied a mobile blood unit in Mekong, Vietnam. Relentless in their selfless devotion to humanitarianism worldwide, Southeastern Connecticut Red Cross has provided a safety net for the 20th Century.

While most of us think of the Red Cross as an international force for good, the presence of the American Red Cross in Connecticut has been important, as well. When the deadliest hurricane to ever hit New England slammed into Eastern Connecticut on September 21, 1938, the Disaster and Civil Preparedness Committee of the Southeastern Chapter responded to the emergency situation immediately, helping countless lives. And the Chapter led the effort to rebuild once the storm had passed. Had it not been for the preparedness of the Chapter in disaster situations, the damage and loss of life sustained would have been far greater.

More recently, the state's organization has created what is now hailed as a model program for preventing the spread of HIV throughout the state. This program has become highly successful, and is partly the reason why cases of new infections have dropped significantly.

Just this year, the destruction brought by hurricane Floyd was mitigated by the Southeastern Red Cross. While parts of Connecticut were so badly soaked by floods that they were declared federal disaster areas, the Southeastern Connecticut American Red Cross was assisting local hospitals and rescuing those in need.

At the turn of the millennium, the American Red Cross faces new challenges. Cultural and national conflicts, natural disasters and acts of nature have caused unimaginable human suffering in recent memory. After each calamity, however, the Red Cross and its volunteers have been there to pick up the pieces. Volunteers from Connecticut have played an active role both around the world and at home over the last 90 years and I rest easier knowing they will continue to play a vital role well into the next century.

So, it is with great pride and gratitude, Mr. President, that I stand on the floor of the Senate today to recognize the accomplishments of the Southeastern Connecticut American Red Cross over these past 90 years. I know I speak for many Connecticut residents in expressing congratulations for achieving this milestone, and best wishes in coming years for continued service to those in need.●

#### IMAM VEHBİ ISMAIL PROCLAMATION

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and honor Imam Vehbi Ismail for his fifty years of dedicated service to the Islamic community.

The Imam has been an instrumental force in the Albanian American and Islamic communities in Michigan. Originally, from Albania he emigrated to the United States in 1949 after studying theology in Egypt. Through his spiritual leadership the Imam set himself on a path to improve the Albanian American community. One of his greatest accomplishments was the establishment of the Albanian Islamic Center where he served as the Senior Cleric.

What is truly remarkable about this extraordinary individual is his work in the areas of democratic and human rights. The Imam has been the driving force in the Michigan community, raising awareness for human rights for Albanians world wide.

The Imam has proudly served as one of the longest active Clerics in the country. His family and the Albanian American community look to him as the elder statesman and guiding spirit for their community.

Mr. President it is with sincere joy and appreciation that I honor the Imam Vehbi Ismail. He is truly an example of unselfish charity and an inspiration to many.●

#### JERRY DAVIS, JR., TRIBUTE

● Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, I come before my colleagues today to pay tribute to a dear friend, Jerry Davis, Jr. Jerry and I first met in the Army when we were stationed in New Jersey together before we headed to Vietnam. Jerry is a man with an extraordinary story and I am proud to be among his circle of friends.

Jerry was born on January 2, 1925 in Terry, Louisiana—a humble beginning for a sharecropper's son destined for the cover of FORTUNE Magazine (October, 1975). Jerry was a man committed to a life of service and his family, his church, his community and his country. A generous, loving and forgiving spirit, a respect for order and tradition and a legendary helping hand were the hallmarks of his life.

After graduating first in his class from the Magnolia Training School, he cut his formal education short, despite receiving a scholarship from Southern University, by enlisting in the U.S. Army. Joining the all African-American 94th Engineer Construction Battalion at the end of World War II, he began his military career as an enlisted man in Paris. Seven years later he completed Officer Training School in Fort Benning, Georgia and as a new 2nd Lieutenant was company commander in the Korean War. In 1967, he returned to combat as one of two African-American battalion commanders in Vietnam. After 26 years of distinguished